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STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

At the 3887th meeting of the Security Council, held on 28 May 1998, in connection with the Council's consideration of the item entitled "The situation in Georgia", the President of the Security Council made the following statement on behalf of the Council:

"The Security Council has considered the report of the Secretary-General concerning the situation in Abkhazia, Georgia, of 11 May 1998 (S/1998/375 and Add.1).

"The Security Council is gravely concerned by the recent outbreak of violence in the zone of conflict, which has resulted in the loss of human life and a significant outflow of refugees, and calls upon the parties to observe strictly the Moscow Agreement of 14 May 1994 on a Ceasefire and Separation of Forces (S/1994/583, annex I) (the Moscow Agreement) and also the ceasefire protocol signed on 25 May 1998, as well as all their obligations to refrain from the use of force and to resolve disputed issues by peaceful means only.

"The Security Council is deeply concerned by the recent slowing of the peace process. The Council calls upon the parties to display the necessary political will to achieve substantial results on the key issues of the negotiations within the framework of the United Nations-led peace process and through direct dialogue, with full respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Georgia.

"The Security Council reaffirms the right of all refugees and displaced persons affected by the conflict to return to their homes in secure conditions, calls upon both sides to fulfil their obligations in this regard, and welcomes in this context the efforts undertaken by the members of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), as set out in document S/1998/372, in support of the return of refugees and of a comprehensive political settlement.

"The Security Council is deeply concerned that the deteriorating security situation in the Gali region gravely impedes the work of aid workers, personnel of the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia and of the Collective Peacekeeping Forces of the Commonwealth of Independent

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States. The Council calls upon the parties to honour fully their commitments to take all measures in their power to improve the security situation, including the creation of a joint mechanism for investigation and prevention of acts that represent violations of the Moscow Agreement and terrorist acts in the zone of conflict.

"The Security Council requests the Secretary-General to consult both sides on the basis of paragraphs 26, 48 and 49 of his report, in particular on the concept of the self-protection unit outlined therein, and on other options as appropriate, in close cooperation with the group of Friends of the Secretary-General, bearing in mind the need to secure the consent of both parties to the Secretary-General's proposal. The Council also requests the Secretary-General to report to the Council on the outcome of those consultations as soon as possible and no later than 12 June 1998."